GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1135
ANSWERED ON:08.02.2017
Internet Connectivity for Cashless Transactions
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Internet connectivity using fibre backbones is essential for cashless transactions;

(b) if so, whether our present network development and spectrum policies do not facilitate achieving universal broadband, especially in areas with lower commercial potential than prosperous urban clusters;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government to address the issue;

(d) whether radical changes such as pooling and sharing network infrastructure is essential for widespread connectivity; and

(e) if so, the concerted action taken by the Union Government to streamline Internet wireless connectivity to boost cashless transactions?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)
(a) No Madam, Internet connectivity using fibre backbones is not necessarily required for cashless transactions.

(b) & (c) The present network development and spectrum policies are uniform for the entire telecom service area irrespective of low commercial areas or urban areas.

However, in order to further improve internet/ broadband facilities in rural areas, BharatNet project has been planned to establish a network infrastructure by connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis.

The project is planned to be implemented in three phases. Under first phase of the project, 1 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be connected by laying underground OFC by March 2017. Under second phase, connectivity will be provided to remaining 1.5 lakh GPs in the country using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, by December, 2018. Futuristic network with ring topology to be used between districts and blocks and blocks and GPs, targeted to be completed by 2023.

As on 29.01.2017, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid to 76,089 Gram Panchayats (GPs) with a total length of 1,72,257 km. Out of these, 16,355 GPs have been provided with broadband connectivity.

(d) Pooling of infrastructure helps in bringing capital cost down. The Department has allowed sharing of active infrastructure such as node B, Radio Access Network (RAN), Antenna Feeder cable & Transmission systems within Licensees apart from permitting sharing of spectrum.

(e) Government has allocated 965 Megahertz spectrum through auction to various telecom service providers during the last one year which will also improve the growth of wireless internet connectivity to further boost the cashless transactions.

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